

Harris-Hollister-Spencer House
1005 East Avenue
Rochester
Monroe County
New York

HABS No. NY-5646

HABS
NY,
28-ROCH,
20-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5646

HARRIS-HOLLISTER-SPENCER HOUSE

NY,
28-ROCH, 20-

Location: 1005 East Avenue, Rochester, Monroe County, New York

Present Owner and Occupant: Thomas G. Spencer

Present Use: Private residence

Statement of Significance: This house, owned by only two separate families, is preserved not only as an architectural document of the modified Italianate style of the exterior and of the Colonial Revival style of the interior, but also as a document of the changing tastes of Rochester's prominent and wealthy citizens.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1865.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: "... a part of lands formerly owned by David Bates ... Lots 6, 7, 13, and 14 ... and also that certain other piece of land being part of the said Bates farm ... Lots 5 and 12 ..."

1864 Deed, March 12, 1864, Book 183, p. 125.

From: Joseph Husbands and wife.

To: Edward Harris.

For: \$1,424.00.

1892 Deed, June 29, 1892, Book 510, p. 218.

From: Edward Harris and Emma Louisa, his wife.

To: Elizabeth C. Watson.

For: \$1.00 and upwards.

This transfer of the title included parts of lots 5, 6, 12 and 13, which form a large parcel extending from East Avenue back to Park Avenue. Since lots 7 and 14 are not mentioned, one assumes that they were removed from the holdings before this sale.

1925 Deed, May 9, 1925. Book 1322, p. 181.

From: Elizabeth C. W. Hollister.

To: Thomas G. Spencer and Harriet Hollister Spencer, his wife.

For: \$1.00 and more dollars.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans: None known.
6. Alterations and additions: The east and west bays were added in 1892. The major interior remodeling, including the enlargement of the dining room and complete alteration of the east entrance and rear hall, was completed at this time. All work was done by J. Foster Warner. In 1925, another interior remodeling was completed. James Arnold of Arnold and Stein was the architect.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

In 1870, Edward Harris was appointed counsel of the Rochester Savings Bank. His law firm, which is now Harris, Beach, Wilcox, Dale and Linowitz, has remained the bank's counsel until today. During the 1870's, Harris joined the East Avenue Shade Tree Association by planting a copper beach sapling. This tree now dominates the house, as do many like it along the avenue. Elizabeth Watson, who purchased the house in 1892, was the daughter of Don Alonzo Watson, partner of Hiram Sibley in Western Union. She married Granger Hollister of the Hollister Lumber Company. In 1925, she sold the house to her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Spencer. Spencer was the treasurer of the Hollister Lumber Company.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds, Office of Monroe County Clerk.

Map of Bates Farm by Silas Cornell, 1842, Book 58,
p. 441.

b. Secondary and published sources:

McIntosh, Prof. W. H. History of Monroe County, New York. Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign and Everts, 1876.

McKelvey, Blake, "East Avenue Turbulent History," special edition of Rochester History. Rochester: Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, 1966.

2. Likely sources not yet investigated; Papers of Thomas G. Spencer.

Prepared by Kevin Patrick Harrington
Society for the Preservation of Landmarks
in Western New York
December 7, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The modified Italianate style of the exterior and the Colonial Revival remodeling of the interior make this structure an excellent document of the changing tastes in architectural style.
2. Condition of fabric: The house has been well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Thirty-two feet by fifty-five feet; two-sectioned, five bay facade; two stories; rectangular plan with projections.
2. Foundations: The roughly dressed painted stone foundations are set with a stone water table.
3. Wall construction: The brick walls of the main block are painted pale yellow. A fifteen foot clapboarded addition to the rear is also painted pale yellow.
4. Structural system: The masonry walls are load bearing.
5. Chimneys: There are six corbeled and paneled brick chimneys. the northwest chimney projects from the wall surface.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are five entrances. The entrance to the north is accessible from the front porch. The double paneled wood doors are fitted with glass panels at the top. There are double screen doors with chamfered framing. A stone lintel caps the doorway. All other doors are single leaf with paneling. The south entrance to the garden was added in 1925. A small paned door is set in a pilastered frame topped by a molded, stepped Colonial Revival entablature.

- b. Windows and shutters: All windows of the main block are double hung, with one over one light sashes. All are set with stone lintels and slightly projecting sills. Windows of the brick rear extension have slightly arched top frames. All windows have louvred shutters. A three bay oriel window has been inserted in the second level of the west, main block.
7. Roof: The low nearly flat roof is finished with molded overhanging eaves. The north main block is fitted with a molded sectioned cornice containing a band of vertically oriented dentils. Other cornices are simply molded. The square cupola is finished with a flat hipped roof. Triple arched windows on each side are set in eared stone frames. The cornice of the main block is repeated.
8. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: A five bay, flat roofed porch to the north is composed of six squared and chamfered columns with molded capitals. Decorative paired brackets set on the capitals receive the cornice which is similar to that of the main block. A railing of turned wood balusters and molded rail encloses the porch. A six step stoop provides access to this porch. A flat-roofed porch with molded entablature supported by similar columns to the front and brackets at the wall frames the east entrance. Access is provided by a five step stair fitted with an iron handrail. The rear east entrance is also fitted with a five step stair. A rear shed-roofed open porch has square molded posts which support a three part, flat arched cornice. Each arch has a keystone. The flagstone floor is at grade level. A stepped stone terrace fitted with a low balustrade is located to the south of the dining room.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plan: The north-south hall extends from the north entrance to the hall at the east entrance. The drawing room is located in the northeast corner, library in the northwest corner and the dining room to the west. The second floor contains five bedrooms and a staircase room.
2. Stairways: The main staircase is located at the intersection of the north-south hallway and east entrance hall. The circular staircase is fitted with a paneled

wainscot, elaborately fluted and banded newel post and slender turned and tapered balusters, three per step. The step ends and the cornice finishing the semi-circular opening have sawn scrollwork. A molded natural finished wood handrail is in contrast to the white painted woodwork. This hall and stairway were completed during the 1892 remodeling in the Colonial Revival style. A short stairway to the south garden is located beneath the curved main staircase and was added in 1925.

3. Flooring: The parquet floors were added during the 1892 remodeling.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are painted plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: The original 1865 doorways are finely molded and set with decorative corner blocks. These remain in the bedrooms and library. All doors are paneled.
6. Special decorative features: The drawing room was originally two bedrooms. In 1892, these spaces were opened, and the bay window, window cornices, beaded moldings, egg and dart moldings and Adam style plasterwork ceiling were added. In 1925, the mantel, the overmantel paneling and shell-topped cupboards, all following the designs from a pre-Revolutionary house in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, were installed. The dark velvet wall coverings were removed and the walls and cherry woodwork were painted ivory.

The library is fitted with oak wainscoting which is believed to be original, but which has been lowered. The windows have the original shutters which fold back into reveals. The fireplace composition, including the broken pedimented overmantel and deeply molded cornice, was copied from the Fairmount Park house in 1925. The upper oak paneling was removed and bookcases were installed.

The dining room paneling, bay window, doors and ceiling plasterwork were added in 1892. The second floor staircase room with paneling, cornices, Adam-style plaster ceiling and fireplace were added by Warner in 1892. The three major bedrooms have original fireplaces.

7. Hardware: No distinctive hardware.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: The library gas chandelier, now electrified, is thought to be original, but perhaps was added when the gas wall sconces were installed in 1892.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces northeast, toward East Avenue which was Rochester's prestigious residential street in the late nineteenth century. The property is within the City of Rochester's East Avenue Preservation District.
2. Historic landscape design: The gardens were designed and planted by Harriet Hollister Spencer. Flagstone terraces and balustrade were designed by the landscape architect Fletcher Steele. The large beech tree to the front and other large trees in the garden were planted by Edward Harris in the 1870's.
3. Outbuildings: None.

Prepared by Edward Atwater and Amy
Hecker
Society for the Preservation
of Landmarks in
Western New York
October, 1967 and March,
1973

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project of twenty-six selections of historical and architecturally significant Rochester structures was undertaken in 1966, by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc., Mrs. Patrick Harrington, Executive Director, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, James C. Massey, Chief. The project was under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Senior Historian. Architectural and historical descriptions were contributed by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc. General photographic documentation was undertaken by Hans Padelt, Senior Engineer, Graflex, on a contractual basis with the Historic American Buildings Survey. The final documentation and editing was done by Susan R. Slade in 1978, for transmittal to the Library of Congress and the impending publication of the Historic American Buildings Survey New York State catalogue.